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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a non-technical summary of the plans and rationale for eleven CETA-Education Demonstration Projects. It also explains the design of the projects and indicates what is expected of the participating prime sponsors, education agencies, and federal departments. Seven principles relating to the need to alleviate youth unemployment by providing youth with basic academic skills, work experience, and career information through community-based networks of people and services are presented as a basis on which to build the CETA programs of the 80s. The emphasis of the Youth Incentives and the rationale for demonstration projects are outlined. The goals and objectives of the demonstration projects are presented. The pilot sites are listed along with the reasons for their selection. Project emphasis areas (CETA, education, and joint program areas) are discussed. Four steps in the formation of project operating plans, which are to be implemented during the first year, are summarized, and additional project activities are described. The role of the Labor and Education Departments in these projects and the help which the demonstration sites will receive are discussed. Project evaluation procedures are covered. A note on the value of the demonstration projects concludes the paper. (MN)

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CETA-EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Sponsored by

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Introduction

The Departments of Education (ED) and Labor (DOL) are funding eleven CETA prime sponsors and participating state or local education agencies to participate in the CETA-Education Demonstration Projects. This paper is a non-technical summary of the plans for the projects and the rationale for them. It also explains the design of the projects and indicates what is expected of the participating prime sponsors, education agencies, and federal departments.

The Policy Review

The local and federal programs which assist youth to prepare for work have been reviewed carefully over the past year and a half. This review developed seven principles on which to build the programs of the 80's:

(1) Youth unemployment will not disappear in the 1980's. As the labor market demands increasing literacy and stricter credentials, disadvantaged youth will continue to have trouble finding jobs.

(2) The lack of basic academic skills - reading, writing, mathematics - bars many young people from jobs. Employers feel strongly that basic skills will become more important as we move into this decade.

(3) In addition to poor basic skills, too many youth lack good work experience. They need a chance to learn sound work habits and they need the reference which a successful job can offer to a prospective employer.

(4) The existing federal youth programs, mainly through the CETA system, are too complex and too saddled with paperwork. Consolidating these programs will help young people understand the system and will give local officials more flexibility.

(5) It is not enough to have job skills, if you do not know where the jobs are. Career information must be more effectively conveyed, if young people are to gain access to the rapidly changing job market of the 1980's.

(6) One way to accomplish this is through the resources of community-based networks of people and services. Organizations which have shown themselves capable must continue to be involved in helping youth.

(7) More generally, the plight of unemployed youth will be improved only through better use of resources and by overcoming the isolation of youth from the world of work. This means partnerships - partnerships between the public and private sectors, among federal, state, and local governments, and between school and work.

The Youth Initiatives

Since DOL and ED feel that these concepts and programs are the logical policy steps in the area of youth employment, both departments have jointly undertaken the Youth Initiatives as the pilot testing of these concepts.

For employment and training programs, the Youth Initiatives build upon lessons learned from the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 (YEDPA). The initiatives simplify and consolidate the programs authorized by Title IV of CETA. In addition, there is a new emphasis on the development of individuals' employment-related skills rather than on immediate placement in income-producing jobs. This emphasis is expressed through:

- Locally formulated achievement standards for youth and for youth programs;
- Long-term employability plans based on individualized assessment;
- Individual achievement records which document youth development; and
- Services which are designed to match youth's needs with their capabilities.

The successful aspects of YEDPA will be maintained: the involvement of community-based organizations, the requirement for joint programs between CETA and local schools, work projects which produce tangible community benefits, and incentives to allow CETA prime sponsors to target funds by creating Entitlement programs in particularly needy neighborhoods.

For education, the Youth Initiatives provide a new program designed to improve the instruction of basic skills - reading, writing, and mathematics - and employment-related skills in local secondary schools. Specifically, the initiatives call for:

- Individual schools to draw up school-wide plans to initiate, expand, and improve instruction in the basic skills;
- Coordination between this instruction and existing programs which teach vocational skills;
- Planning by the school district to assure efficient integration of policies and programs; and
- Joint funding of activities by school systems and CETA prime sponsors.

There are similarities between this new education program and the compensatory education programs mandated for elementary schools under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The initiatives, however, are aimed at the nation's poorest secondary schools.

Through its provisions many of these urban and rural high schools will, for the first time, be able to assess and upgrade the instruction they offer to non-college bound youth.

The success of piloting the Youth Initiatives will hinge on the quality of the relationship between local education agencies and local CETA offices. Because of YEDPA, such a relationship already exists in most places, but the initiatives will escalate the need for this most critical of local partnerships. Elements of the initiatives can be found in communities throughout the country, but seldom have the schools and CETA collaborated on the intensive basis demanded by the initiatives. The CETA-Education Demonstration Projects will explore the implications, virtues, and hazards of joint programming. We have learned how vital such an approach is for assisting disadvantaged youth into the labor market. The task now is to make it work.

Why Demonstration Projects?

The logic behind the demonstration projects is simple. The Youth Initiatives urge the creation of new opportunities for prime sponsors and education agencies to work together in meeting the employment and education needs of disadvantaged youth. Prime sponsors will make a transition from the experimental programs of YEDPA to consolidated programs. School systems will implement a completely new program aimed at secondary level youth. Together, prime sponsors and education agencies will be planning around many issues - from specific programs to job placements to achievement records.

If there was one clear lesson from the YEDPA experience, it was that the impact of new policies or programs depends heavily on how it is adopted locally. Effective local implementation cannot be prescribed in federal regulations. Many of the key decisions which will determine its impact will be made by local officials and will reflect conditions which vary considerably from place to place.

The importance of local implementation means several things. First, federal regulations and plans for assistance should be based on a realistic appraisal of how the Youth Initiatives will work in different settings around the country. Second, in order to glean these insights, it is necessary to let some localities begin planning the key aspects of the Youth Initiatives. Third, if these demonstration sites are carefully scrutinized and well publicized, their success can spur national interest and lead the way to legislative adoption of the policies which underlie the Youth Initiatives.

What are the Goals and Objectives of the Demonstration Projects?

The short-term goal of the projects is to help prepare both the education and employment systems to implement the key requirements of the Youth Initiatives. At a minimum, then, the sites will be expected to comply with the administrative and programmatic provisions of the initiatives. A second long-term goal of the projects, is to set in motion needed changes

in youth programs. We know from experience that the form of legislative requirements can be met with relatively little difficulty; however, the substance of what is to be accomplished for youth will be more difficult to achieve.

The third goal of the CETA-Education Demonstration Projects is to determine how local employment and education programs can be jointly planned and closely coordinated despite the fact that such programs receive their funding from two different sets of channels. Neither the Department of Education and Labor, nor their state and local counterparts, have much experience managing dually funded programs.

The objectives of the projects are:

(1) To gain direct operational experience at the local, state, regional and national levels in implementing programmatic and administrative concerns underlying the Youth Initiatives, with a focus on improving the actual delivery of increasingly individualized services to young people;

(2) To create highly visible examples of successful implementation of the policies and programs envisioned by the Youth Initiatives;

(3) To identify particularly difficult implementation problems (e.g., the formulation of joint agreements between school districts and prime sponsors), and to develop strategies to resolve them;

(4) To form a part of the technical assistance capability at the regional, state and national levels to assist both the CETA and education systems in implementation;

(5) To develop prototype training and informational material on exemplary practices and program models; and

(6) To provide a mechanism for ongoing local feedback to federal, regional, and state officials about implementation processes, including development of regulations, timetables, contracting procedures and technical assistance strategies.

Where are the demonstration sites?

Eleven project sites have been chosen. Nominations and selections took into account:

- Communities which represent a national cross-section along such dimensions as urban-rural, size, and level of governmental involvement;

- Sites in which the prime sponsor is well managed and has shown an ability to operate demonstration programs;

- Communities whose schools are potentially eligible to receive the highly targeted basic skills funds of the Youth Initiatives;

- Sites in which there was significant cooperation between the prime sponsor and education agencies; and

- Communities which could play a role in regional technical assistance.

The process for selecting the pilot sites went as follows: the Labor Department solicited nominations of prime sponsors through its ten Regional Offices. The strongest candidate in each region was selected. The prime sponsors, with concurrence from the Education Department, then selected a cooperating local or state education agency in their jurisdiction. The result of this process is a mixture of localities which reflects the communities' past accomplishments and their aptness for a leading role in the Youth Initiatives.

The following sites have been selected:

Region I:	Boston, Massachusetts
Region II:	Rochester, New York
	South Bronx, New York
Region III:	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Region IV:	South Carolina
Region V:	Detroit, Michigan
Region VI:	Houston, Texas
Region VII:	Balance-of-State, Iowa
Region VIII:	Adams County, Colorado
Region IX:	Ventura County, California
Region X:	Balance-of-State, Washington

What will the projects be expected to do?

During the life of the projects, the participating prime sponsors and education agencies will be expected to carry out three major activities:

(1) To plan for and then implement the new youth employment and education policies as embodied in the Youth Initiatives;

(2) To take a leadership role in demonstrating to other communities the planning and implementation requirements of the Youth Initiatives, especially the joint CETA-LEA requirements; and

(3) To specialize in certain elements of the Youth Initiatives through Model Activities.

The first of these activities is obviously the most demanding and the most important. Nevertheless, since it is not intended that the demonstration sites actually implement all of the Youth Initiatives within the next few months, it is possible to indicate the areas in which each project will be

expected to plan for implementation. These are known as Emphasis Areas and they incorporate the main themes of the initiatives as well as its major programmatic categories.

The Emphasis Areas

The Emphasis Areas have been chosen to provide guidance to the demonstration sites as they plan for the Youth Initiatives. The Implementation Plans submitted by the sites will have to address each of these areas and show how the agencies intend to progress from compliance to full adoption of objectives of each Emphasis Area. In addition, the Emphasis Areas will be the source from which the sites draw to specialize in certain practices or programs, as indicated under the third of the activities listed in the previous section.

The Emphasis Areas fall into three categories: those concerned primarily with the CETA system, those pertaining to schools, and those which involve joint planning or joint programs. The last of these categories is the largest for the CETA-Education Demonstration Projects. We will describe a few Emphasis Areas in each of these categories. This is not a complete list, but should illustrate what will be expected of the site.

(a) CETA

- The Labor Department intends to transform the fragmented programs of CETA Title IV into a single, integrated youth program. CETA-Education Demonstration Projects will launch this consolidation process sooner than other prime sponsors;

- The private sector has an enhanced consultative and programmatic role in the Youth Initiatives, but in order for the potential of public/private collaboration to be reached, CETA prime sponsors will need to develop plans to stimulate broader, voluntary involvement of employers; and

- Improving the quality of contracted CETA youth programs has been a priority. Successful efforts have been undertaken in the Summer Program, the Job Corps, the YEDPA demonstration. The Youth Initiatives will give prime sponsors greater flexibility in determining which services they need, but it will also require that they formulate and enforce stricter performance standards for their contractors.

The pace at which prime sponsors achieve the objective of each Emphasis Area will depend on their current status, available models, and the complexity of the issue. Since the Youth Initiatives are actually a revision of CETA programs prime sponsors will be expected to put into place programmatic changes more quickly than education agencies which will be dealing with a wholly new categorical program.

(b) Education

- The Youth Initiatives specify a rigorous process through which individual schools can plan better instructional programs. This is known as school-wide planning and will necessitate the identification and participation of specific schools within the local education agency;

- These schools will emphasize basic skills instruction. The Youth Initiatives will require that schools be measured - in part - according to their success at improving the skill level of their students. The demonstration projects will seek ways to accomplish this within specific junior and senior high schools; and

- Demonstration sites will integrate vocational education with basic skills instruction, devising ways to reduce the barriers which often separate vocational from regular education programs. The Youth Initiatives will require that schools be measured according to their success at improving their students' employability — as well as basic — skills.

(c) Joint Program Areas

The spectrum across which prime sponsors and public schools will be expected to cooperate is a broad one. It ranges from agreements on credit arrangements to joint programs to common definitions of desireable youth achievements. The Youth Initiatives will require certain kinds of cooperation; the demonstration projects will illustrate this cooperation, but, in addition, will cooperate voluntarily around issues where such cooperation is clearly useful. Joint program areas include:

- The Youth Initiatives refer to ways to measure participant achievements in both employment and education programs. These achievement standards (sometimes described as "competencies" or "benchmarks") will be formulated jointly by prime sponsors and education agencies;

- One of the criticisms of past youth programs has been that they did not address the individual needs of youth and did not fit together to form a coherent, multi-year package. The demonstration projects will share the tasks of developing an individualized assessment and planning process;

- The Youth Initiatives set aside 22% of the funds to be spent on joint programs for in-school youth. This continues one of the most successful features of YEDPA, but, now, these programs (which can include alternative schools) must be coordinated with other LEA activities; and

- The desire to guarantee community involvement sometimes results in a proliferation of advisory councils. The projects will seek ways to develop effective councils and to minimize the conflict between existing groups and the requirements of the Youth Initiatives.

The ten Emphasis Areas described above - along with additional Areas - will be defined more precisely in planning materials given to the demonstration sites. They are especially important as the core around which the required plans and activities will center.

Are there stages to the demonstration process?

Although the projects may extend for more than one year, there are four important steps which occur during the first year:

(1) Before the sites can receive any planning funds, the prime sponsor and education agency must sign a Letter of Agreement which commits them to working together according to specifications set down by the Departments of Education and Labor;

(2) Each site will then receive approximately $100,000 to cover their planning costs during a five-month period. Prime sponsors and education agencies will be expected to do several things during this period. For example, they will compile an inventory of existing programs, identify Emphasis Areas where they believe they are exemplary, and jointly hire a person to serve as liaison between the two institutions. The main product of this planning period will be a Demonstration Project Operating Plan submitted to the Departments for approval. The Plan will follow the pattern set by the Emphasis Areas and will be judged, in part, on evidence that the sites have already mobilized themselves to implement the Initiatives;

(3) Once this Operating Plan is approved, the sites will receive additional funds to permit them to implement a full-fledged program. This Plan must be submitted by May 15, 1981 and will spell out how the sites will achieve the objectives of each Emphais Area; and

(4) On July 1, 1981, these Operating Plans will be put into effect. Different communities will be given latitude in the speed with which they implement elements of the Youth Initiatives.

What else must the Demonstration Projects do?

Because these projects are intended to serve as regional demonstration sites for the Youth Initiatives, each prime sponsor and education agency will identify staff to serve in a training or informational capacity. The sites must be prepared to host meetings, be visited by other LEAs and CETA agencies, assist in regional training sessions, and be a significant contributor

to the Departments' nationwide technical assistance and training plans. These leadership activities will begin as early as February and will probably continue into the full implementation stage after October 1981.

What role will the federal Departments take?

The Labor and Education Departments will take differing roles, since the structure of their respective concerns is so different. The CETA system is a federal creation with a growing network of community agencies and a newly strengthened set of Regional Offices. Public education has traditionally been the province of local communities, with, in many places, the state occupying a role somewhat analogous to that the Labor Department's Regional Offices. The different structures of the employment and education systems mean that the federal Departments will exert special care not to overburden the demonstration projects with useless layers of reporting and approval.

The Labor Department will operate its side of the projects through its Regional Offices which will contract with the eleven prime sponsors. The Education Department will contract directly with each of the ten education agencies but, in so doing, will consult with the appropriate state and vocational education agencies. The roles of both federal Departments will continue to evolve, particularly in the area of technical assistance.

What kind of help will the demonstration sites receive?

The eleven prime sponsors and cooperating education agencies are being asked to take on a major challenge by becoming the first communities to tackle the requirements of the Youth Initiatives. This pathbreaking activity will require considerable assistance both nationally and locally. But it also offers communities a considerable reward - the opportunity to influence the course of federal youth policies in a direct and lasting manner.

The technical assistance offered to the sites will help them to carry out their basic tasks as demonstrations and will help them to become part of the Youth Initiatives implementation assistance in their region. The eleven prime sponsors will benefit from the concomitant inauguration of the Labor Department's new knowledge utilization strategy. Working through the Regional Offices, the prime sponsors will have access to aid on a range of issues.

Although a comparable training mechanism does not exist through the Education Department, regional technical assistance organizations and individuals will be identified and utilized by the Department as keystones in its Youth Initiatives plans. These agents will pay special attention to CETA-education concerns and will work closely with the projects to shape the emerging Education Department assistance strategy.

Will the projects be evaluated?

There is no need to perform a conventional evaluation of the demonstration projects. There is, however, a need to scrutinize what is happening at the sites; to assess this relative to important national issues; and to communicate this information rapidly and effectively to the Labor and Education Departments and to the sites themselves.

This task, which is a type of process evaluation, is the glue which will hold the demonstration concept together. Without an objective and timely source of information on the projects, their value in providing operational feedback may be lost. In addition, the process evaluation will be a resource itself to the sites. Through its reports and through meetings, the process evaluation will document the strengths and weaknesses of the sites and help to identify exemplary programs and practices.

This documentation strategy is an unusual approach made necessary by the unusual nature of the projects. They are an attempt to address the questions raised by practitioners about the way new federal programs are planned and adopted. They are a response to the realities of practice but, if they are to be heard, it will depend on the quality of the information which flows back and forth, from the sites to the federal Departments.

Are the demonstration projects worthwhile?

The eleven projects are not intended to monopolize plans and resources for the Youth Initiatives. Since so much of what they are expected to do is necessarily of a process nature, their effects may - in the long run - be seen as modest. There is no delusion that the projects will accomplish enormous changes in a matter of months nor that their presence alone will transform the fate of disadvantaged youth.

Yet, to assess their value, we should return to the lessons derived from reviewing past program experience. The demonstration projects will be modeling a partnership, the relationship between schools and employment agencies which our review described as follows:

> The essence of partnership is mutual trust, which doesn't materialize over night. The partnerships are working alliances with well-formulated goals and a commitment to getting things done. The partners learn to trust each other...by acknowledging the others concerns. When a sense of trust exists, things start happening.

The intense relationship expected between prime sponsors and education agencies will be difficult to get started, but once going it can galvanize the changes necessary to improve the prospects for unemployed youth in the 1980's.